

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 2

By Jackson

A RESOLUTION to urge the Tennessee Commission of Indian Affairs and the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs to recognize the Cherokee Wolf Clan as Native American Indians.

WHEREAS, the original inhabitants of North and South America were peoples who became known to European immigrants as Indians and, therefore, the original inhabitants of this State were members of various tribes of American Indians; and

WHEREAS, these tribes have strongly influenced the heritage of this great State and have left their mark by way of names of rivers, mountains, towns, and counties, by introducing local crops and medicinal herbs, and in countless other ways; and

WHEREAS, the advance of European settlement, accompanied by the introduction of European diseases and the disingenuous treaty-making by land-hungry settlers, had a devastating effect upon the Native American Indian population; the crowning blow was the forced resettlement of Southeastern tribes in the Oklahoma territory by the Jackson administration over 150 years ago, known to the Cherokee as the "Trail of Tears"; and

WHEREAS, the spirit of the tribes was not broken, surviving confinement on reservations, Americanization through suppression of language and culture, and detrimental practices by early Indian agents and the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and

WHEREAS, there is at present a resurgence of pride in Native American culture in all its forms, as characterized by the year-round Powwows held across the country and the imminent completion of the National Museum of the American Indian in the Smithsonian complex in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, more than 40,000 American Indians are currently residents of Tennessee; thousands of other Tennesseans proudly claim some Indian ancestry, but lack the precise genealogical evidence for documentation; and

WHEREAS, dramatic evidence of a resurgent American Indian presence in this State is the formation of the Cherokee Wolf Clan, along with other tribes and clans of Native Americans across the State. The Cherokee Wolf Clan, comprised of Cherokee, Chickamauga, Shawnee, Choctaw, Blackfoot, and various other tribes, is governed by a formal constitution, with a Principal Chief, a Cabinet, a Tribal Council, and a Tribal Court; and

WHEREAS, the Cherokee Wolf Clan hopes to unite and seek recognition for all Native Americans in Tennessee and has long-range plans for a Native American Museum, a library, a school, a health clinic, a trade school, a tribal office, a playground, a working Native American village with workshops, and a location for its annual Powwows; and

WHEREAS, a wholehearted recognition of the role of the original peoples of this State and region is long overdue, and our official approval of the admirable goals of the Cherokee Wolf Clan and all the Native Americans of Tennessee is appropriate; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that this General Assembly go on record as endorsing the recognition of the Cherokee Wolf Clan and other tribes of Tennessee as Native American Indians.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be transmitted to the appropriate officials within the Tennessee Commission of Indian Affairs and the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs with this final clause omitted from such copy.